

Shelby County voter registration applications surge, but many deemed invalid

[Jamie Munks](#), Memphis Commercial Appeal Published 7:00 p.m. CT Oct. 8, 2018 | Updated 12:10 p.m. CT Oct. 9, 2018



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July 13, 2018 - Scenes from the first day of early voting at Mississippi Boulevard Christian Church. (Photo: Brad Vest/The Commercial Appeal)

The Shelby County Election Commission has seen a surge in voter registration applications leading up to the Tuesday deadline, but a significant share of those applications have been invalid.



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July 13, 2018 - Noel Hutchinson, left, and his wife, Rebecca Hutchinson, vote on the first day of early voting at Mississippi Boulevard Christian Church. Hutchinson was a plaintiff in the lawsuit filed by the Memphis NAACP to open inner-city early voting sites at the start of early voting. (Photo: Brad Vest/The Commercial Appeal)

“Typically, I would expect to get 10,000 forms in a mid-year election cycle,” Shelby County Election Commission Administrator of Elections Linda Phillips said. “We have received nearly 30,000 since registration re-opened after the August election.”

A large share of the influx of voter registration applications has been duplicates of already-registered voters, incomplete applications, and applications from felons who can't vote or are otherwise unable to be processed.

As of the end of last week, about 55 percent of the voter registration applications submitted have been invalid, according to the commission

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The deadline to register to vote ahead of the Nov. 6 general election [is Tuesday](#). Voter registration status can be checked at [govotetn.com](#) or [shelbyvote.com](#).

A number of groups, including I am a Voter and the Tennessee Black Voter Project, have submitted thousands of voter registration applications. The Tennessee Black Voter Project has submitted the most – nearly 9,000, as of Friday.

The Tennessee Black Voter Project worked with five local organizations, including Rise Up North Memphis and Up the Vote 901, to ramp up voter registration this election cycle. The statewide organization, based in Nashville, announced plans earlier this fall to register 55,000 Tennessee voters before the Oct. 9 deadline.

The Pew Elections Performance Index in 2016 ranked Tennessee 49th in the nation for voter registration.

Between the five local groups, there are upwards of 25 paid organizers, and also a number of volunteers, said Tequila Johnson, statewide manager of the Tennessee Black Voter Project.

“We won’t stop until tomorrow,” Johnson said on Monday.

Voters in Shelby County will weigh in Nov. 6 on a number of federal, state and local races, and Tennessee voters will choose a new governor.

Applications to register to vote must be postmarked or received by the Shelby County Election Commission by Oct. 9, and absentee ballots must be requested from the commission by Oct. 30.

Residents with a Tennessee Driver's License or Tennessee Department of Safety ID can use the online system to register to vote or update their information, by visiting <https://ovr.govote.tn.gov/Registration/index/BM>.

Early voting runs from Oct. 17 to Nov. 1.

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